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The choice of goals and practices to be utilized in approaches to effecting behavioral change is usually determined by the practitioner's view of the mechanisms underlying behavioral organization.

Two behavior theories are the projective view and the reflectional view of the mechanisms underlying behavioral organization. In the projective view, predetermined, intrinsic patterns are thought to be released by stimulation and projected to the environment, where their specific form is facilitated or inhibited.

The reflectional position holds that all organized patterned behaviors are reflections of the interaction between the organism and its environment. Situational phenomena are causative and mediating agents.

When behavior theory is used to guide practice in directed learning, the differences in the two positions are manifested in the goals, the design and the management of learning experiences.

Children living under conditions of deprivation are reported to show high rates of social maladjustment, behavioral disturbances, physical disability, and mental subnormality. Positive and negative characteristics of these children are listed. Six implications of the reflectional position for directed learning in socially and culturally disadvantaged children are also given.

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RELEVANCE OF BEHAVIOR THEORY TO DIRECTED LEARNING IN CULTURALLY AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Projectionist vs. Interactionist Views

The manner in which investigators of practitioners approach the understanding of the organization of behavior or the modification of behavioral organization is greatly influenced by the theoretical position held with respect to the genesis of patterned behavior. Problems raised for investigation, the research design chosen, as well as phenomena which are observed, generally reflect the theoretical bias of the investigator. The choice of goals and practices to be utilized in approaches to behavioral change are usually determined by the practitioner's view of the mechanisms underlying behavioral organization.

Theories of behavior may be divided between those which posit an essentially projective view and those which posit an essentially reflectional or interactive view of the machanisms underlying behavioral organization. In the projective view predetermined, intrinsic patterns are thought to be released by stimulation and projected on to the environment where their specific form is facilitated or inhibited. Among persons adhering to this position, emphasis is given to hypotheses concerning the existence in the organism of intrinsic drive states which exist prior to and independently of life experiences and which are the basic forces in

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the determination of behavior. Certain behavioral patterns are seen as preformed, stored and waiting for the proper time and condition for emergence. Capacities and traits are seen as determined by these intrinsic factors which can only be modified somewhat by the environment. The fundamental character of patterned behavior is seen as genetically established and bound. Environmental forces are considered to influence the organization of behavior by determing: 1) the directions taken by the primary energies and drives; 2) the environmental objects to which they become attached; and 3) the specific time a d form in which they will emerge.

On the other hand, the interactionist or reflectional position holds that all organized patterned behaviors are reflections of the interaction between the organism and its environment. Environmental interaction is seen as the crucial determinant and molder of patterned organismic function. Temporal and situational phenomena are not releaser but causative and mediating agents. Behavioral characteristics, traits, species typical behaviors, - all organized patterned behavior - are seen to exist only as a result of sensory input flowing from the organism and the environment. Behavioral potentials are said to be genetically seeded in the sense that the organism includes structural responsivity which is determined by the nature of the genes, but the behavioral patterns, behavioral characteristics and quality of functions are determined by interactions between organism and environment with the nature of these interactions being critical for organized behavior.

Now, what is the Relationship of this Controversy to Directed Learning?

When behavior theory is used to guide practice in directed learning, the differences in the two positions are manifested in the goals, design and management of learning experiences. (Directed learning is used here as an inclusive term to cover pedagogy, counseling and psychotherapy.)

The dominance of the projective view in directed learning has been reflected in:

A. A laissez-faire or neglectful attitude toward the training and development of intelligence;

B. A monitoring as opposed to a stimulating approach to academic and social readiness and personality development;

C. An exaggerated emphasis on the predictive value of the classification and quantification of psychological appraisal data and the neglect of qualitative appraisal data as a basis for planning and intervention;

D. Distortion of aspiration and expectation levels based upon unjustified ceilings on potentials for human development and adaptation;

E. Placement of the burden of proof: 1) on the examinee rather than on the appraiser or appraisal method; 2) on the learner rather than on the teacher or teaching method; and 3) on the counselee rather than on the counselor or counseling method;

F. Emphasis on adjustment or acceptance of assumed realities rather than on modification of the environment and the individual's interaction with same;

G. Overemphasis on selection and placement (educational and vocational) with an underemphasis on the nurturing of interests and aptitudes and the development and training of capacities and skills;

H. An eclectic and empirical approach to research in directed learning with little application of the scientific method in exploration, experimentation and investigation.

Now despite my negative view of these influences of projectionist theory on directed learning, it has worked for many learners or at least many learners have learned something despite its influence. But what of those who do not learn or who have not learned at the same rate and in the same way as have our successful learners? What is the relationship of the controversy to directed learning for socially and culturally disadvantaged learners?

A problem of increasing proportion in educational and social planning is that of providing educational opportunities appropriate to the characteristics and needs of large numbers of children who live in communities where income level and social status are low; where general intellectual stimulation is inappropriate to a high level of academic achievement; and where patterns of social organization, cultural characteristics and cultural values differ

markedly from those which are dominant in middle-class society.

Several studies of children attending school in many of our disadvantaged communities have pointed to atypicalities in development and in attitudes toward academics and in school achievement. Children living under varying conditions of deprivation and social-cultural atypicality are also reported to show disproportionately high rates of social maladjustment, behavioral disturbance, physical disability and mental subnormality. The fact of academic deficiency among a high percentage of this population is also well documented. The specific nature of these deficiencies is not so clearly documented; but in the few attempts at specifying the characteristics of these learners, several conditions seem commonplace. Among these are:

A. Weaknesses in the utilization of abstract symbols and complex language forms to interpret and communicate;

B. Weaknesses in the utilization of abstract cognitive processes with marked tendency to favor concrete, stimulus-bound cognitive processes;

C. Styles and modes of perceptual habituation which do not complement the emphases which are important to traditional academic efficiency;

D. Low-level academic task orientation and variable levels of general task involvement;

E. Low-level aspiration and motivation re academics and academic products, as well as in relation to some social norms;

F. Utilitarian and materialistic attitudes, not unlike those which dominate in our society, but which in the light of limited horizons and opportunities function as depressants on motivation, aspiration and achievement;

G. Contradictory attitudes toward self and others whith low self concept and the resultant exaggerated positive and negative attitudes toward others prevalent;

H. Marked socio-cultural patterns in their conditions of life which tend to be non-complementary to traditional standards of academic achievement and social stability: these include hypermobility, family instability, distorted model relationships, economic insufficiency, housing inadequacy, as well as hyper and hypo stimulation.

Even fewer attempts have been made at identifying the positive characteristics of socially disadvantaged children. However, among these may be listed the following:

A. Selective motivation, creativity and proficiency

B. Complex symbolization in in-group language forms and ritual behavior

C. Functional computational skills

D. Accuracy of perception and generalization around some social, psychological and physical phenomena

E. Selective recall, association and generalization

F. Capacity for meaningful and loyal personal relationships

G. Capacity for meaningful and sustained selective task involvement

H. Ingeniousness and resourcefulness in the pursuit of self selected goals

These positive and negative characteristics may be viewed as intrinsically determined, environmentally fixed patterns which lend themselves to but modest modification. Such a view would be consistent with a projectionist view of behavior and is certainly the implied position flowing from traditional approaches to the rehabilitation of socially disadvantaged children. These characteristics may also be viewed as the products of social, economic and cultural factors which have imposed patterns of organismic-environmental interaction which are inappropriate to the mastery of developmental tasks peculiar to traditional standards of academic, social and personal achievement. Since it is clear that the dominant influence of projectionist theory in pedagogy, counseling and psychotherapy has not enabled these disciplines to deal effectively with the problems of children handicapped by social disadvantage and cultural atypicality, it is of crucial importance that we examine some of the implications that flow from an alternative theoretical position.

I have provided some examples of the manner in which the projectionist theory is reflected in the design and management of learning experiences. I have also pointed to some of the special characteristics of socially and culturally disadvantaged children. Many of these characteristics identify this population as an underdeveloped and handicapped group when compared to the

norms we have come to associate with middle class white children for whom much of our procedures in education and counseling have been developed. When social and cultural atypicalities result in disadvantages for the learner, differences in the design and management of learning experiences become crucial. What then are some of the implications of the interactionist position for directed learning in socially and culturally disadvantaged children?

1. Theorists and investigators working within the context of interactionist theory suggests that the concept of fixed intelligence is no longer tenable. Intelligence is seen as a non-static variable phenomenon based upon the nature and quality of central processes or cell assemblies which are the products of organismic-environmental interactions. The quality of intellect is a function of the nature of the interaction between organism and environment. Much of what we see as adequate or inadequate intellectual functioning is a product of processes that man can control.

2. Motivational and attitudinal factors are experientially determined and experientially modified.

This postulate is best reflected in Hebb's and Hunt's use of the Incongruity-Dissonance Principle which Hunt sees as making both motivation and reinforcement "intrinsic to the organism's relations with its environment, intrinsic, if you will, to the organism's information processing. It is as if the organism operated like an

error actuated, feedback system where the error is derived from discrepancy between receptor-inputs of the present and the residues of past experience which serve as the basis for anticipating the future."

What we reflect as motivation and attitude are the products of current sensory inputs interacting with residuals of earlier experience. These earlier experience residuals are thought to gain sequential organization. Grossly incongruous inputs disrupt this organization while slight degrees of incongruity lend interest and are stimulating. What we see as no motivation and negative attitude are instances of environmental encounters which are grossly incongruous with residues of prior experience.

3. The interactionist position leads us to conclude that the dialectics of development give temporal and sequential factors a critical role in determining the appropriateness of procedures in behavioral development and change. It appears that the so-called normal patterns of development gain their temporal and sequential regularity from a natural history which is common to a given species. Where variations and deprivations occur, expected patterns are disturbed. This is evident in some of the work in sensory deprivation, critical periods and developmental tasks. It is coming to be appreciated and reflected in some of the better examples of programed instruction.

4. In the applied area disturbed learning patterns are coming to be recognized as the products of specific learning disabilities.

The interactionist position suggests that learning disability may be a primary disorder reflecting the nature of the child's formal and informal learning experiences and should not be routinely regarded as a secondary disorder representing a projection of intrinsic disturbances or limitations. Atypicalities in any one or combination of points one, two and three may result in disturbances in learning, and remediation which does not take these into account will be ineffective.

5. If we view the learner as a product of the interaction between organism and environment, psycho-educational design in directed learning for socially and culturally disadvantaged children must be dictated by the topography of the learner (an analysis of the specific and detailed character of the learner) and the topology of the learner's experience (an analysis of the specific and detailed history of the learner's experience.)

This kind of analysis can only result from qualitative appraisal, descriptively reported and leading not simply to diagnosis and classification but to prescription and treatment which are appropriate to the topography and topology identified.

6. Finally, if the interactionist position is valid, we must accept <u>far</u> greater responsibility for the behavioral development of all of our children. If that which is supplied through the sensory pool (as a result of the organismic-environmental interaction) is as important as we believe, we have the responsibility

for determining and providing those specific patterns of environmental encounters which are maximally productive of wholesome development and satisfying life. With such knowledge, it is inconceivable that a nation which has solved the problems of the release and control of nuclear energy and which can produce more wealth than it can appropriately consume, it is inconceivable that such a nation could not turn away from its preoccupation with the destruction of life and pour its energies and resources into the creation of more abundant life.